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ABSTRACT

This guide first discusses the process of aging and how it can become a curricular inclusion within Ohio elementary schools. Possibly because the aged are becoming more visible and because a number of changes in attitudes and values may be occurring rather rapidly in some areas, a new look is being taken regarding the study of aging, with the result that some new approaches to the area of study are emerging. One of these involves the role formal education might play in assisting the individual's growth toward well-being and self-fulfillment, not only in the early years of life but also in the post-maturational phases. Suggestions are made for in-service teacher education on aging. Broad goals are offered as guidelines for curriculum construction, along with specific objectives. Resource materials and implementation procedures are included. (Author/KA)

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CURRICULAR CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by Esther E. Jacobs

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CURRICULAR CONSIDERATIONS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

DEATH AND THE AGING PROCESS

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INTRODUCTION

This is about the process of aging and how it can become a curricular inclusion within Ohio elementary schools.

In the last two decades there has been a marked interest in the study of human aging in this country, due to a variety of converging societal factors. As Brody writes, "the phenomenon of a large aging population is one of the most dramatic and influential developments of the twentieth century. Never before have there been so many older people nor have they been so old."[1]

It is estimated that by 1985 there will be 25 million persons age 65 and over in the United States, a figure which represents approximately 10% of the projected population.[2] Mere statistics, of course, by themselves tell us very little, unless they are viewed in the broad context of the general economic and social milieu.[3] Thus it may be said that "modern society's interest in aging is less a product of numbers than a way of looking at the aged and at its own responsibilities and capabilities in relation to them."[4]

Possibly due to the fact that the aged are increasing in visibility and also that a number of changes in attitudes and values may be occurring rather rapidly in some areas, a new look is being taken regarding the study of aging, with the result that some new approaches to the area of study are emerging. One of these involved the role formal education might play in assisting the individual's growth toward well being and self-fulfillment, not only in the early year of his life but also in the post-maturational phases.[5]

It is our firm conviction that inservice education for teachers about aging should occur at an in-depth level before any curricular implementation is attempted. We would want to create sensitivity about aging for elementary teachers; want to develop more positive attitudes among the young toward the older members of our society; and want to examine the stereotypes and distortions that exist about older people. Ideally the application of these sensitivities about aging will result in the development of curriculum materials for elementary children.

Any number of topics could serve as subjects for inservice education. Suggested items:

- Aging as a Normal Process
- Biomedical Aspects of Aging
- Death and Dying
- Aging and Literature
- Housing Patterns
- Social Interaction
- Community Organization
- Impact and Realities of Retirement
- Personality Change and Age
- Nutrition and Age Change
- Social Impact of Increased Longevity
- Career Changes Over the Lifespan
- Learning Over the Lifespan
- Development of Curriculum Materials of Aging
- Intellectual and Cognitive Changes over the Lifespan

BROAD GOALS

The following goals are offered as guidelines for curriculum construction. They are also offered as building blocks for the foundation of information necessary for a background on the process of aging.

Broad goals could include those listed below:

To create sensitivity about aging for elementary teachers and children.

To apply these sensitivities about aging to the development of curriculum materials for elementary school students.

To develop more positive attitudes of kindness, understanding, and acceptance among the young toward the older members of our society.

To examine the stereotypes and distortions that exist about older persons.

To develop a positive image of senior citizens.

To examine the statistics and facts relating to the increase of the lifespan, to the increase in the numbers of senior citizens, and to the need to accommodate this ever-increasing group of people.

To develop the concept that certain needs remain constant regardless of age.

To develop positive attitudes toward personal development and aging.

To recognize that good nutrition, adequate sleep, and physical activity are all necessary and important throughout life, from babyhood through old age.

To develop positive and wholesome attitudes toward death and dying.

To develop specific concepts related to the aged person:

1. there is no one-to-one relationship between old age and illness;
2. older people as a group have no one pattern of personality or character; they <u>are</u> different - not all alike.
3. people age at different rates; just because one gets to be 70, 80 or 90 does <u>not</u> mean he is "old."

To break-down the "graded" expressions often referred to older adults.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Specific objectives follow naturally. Appropriate ones based on the needs and developmental level of each respective group of children will need to be selected.

The students will be introduced and will read trade books dealing with the relationships of children with the aged and with death as it affects the child.

The students will view and discuss appropriate audio-visual resources related to aging.

The students will be introduced and will visit with a variety of aged persons in an attempt to help them realize that older people as a group have no one pattern of personality or character. They are all different - not all alike.

The students will recognize that the older adult can be a "resource person" who is still much needed in today's society.

The students will illustrate their needs and wants and discuss the relationship of these needs and wants to age.

The students will develop a list of ways a person might achieve the greatest self-actualization in life.

The students will make up a bulletin board illustrating the things that make them happy and the things that make them sad. These things will be related to the older generation, if possible.

The students will illustrate a picture of one of their grandparents. They will also illustrate their own picture of how they predict they will look when they are a grandparent.

The students will illustrate through creative movement
How would you move:

- -if tomorrow you were going to see your grandparents?
- -if you thought no one loved you?
- -if you were one year old?
- -if you were ten years old?
- -when you are old?
- -How does your sister move?
- -How does your mother move?

and then will discuss the reasons for the similarities and differences.

The students will develop, analyze, and discuss tapes which they prepared on the following topics:

What does retirement mean to me?
What is leisure time?
What do people do when they retire?
Where do older people get their money?
What is aging?
What is old?
How do I feel about getting old?
What is a grandmother?
What is a grandfather?

The students will compare these tapes with those made by an older person.

The students will compare and contrast their favorite things - music, food, etc., with their parents, grandparents, etc.

The students will adopt a grandparent and share information about themselves by writing letters to these "adopted" grandparents.

The students will arrange a bulletin board or illustrate a mural depicting people at various age levels along with the activities most common at each age level.

The students will role play persons at different age levels.

The students will write a description comparing and contrasting themselves with their baby brother or sister/with grandparents.

The students will make a picture album illustrating the ways they have changed since they were born.

The students will write a story illustrating how some particular thing they might do now may affect them twenty, thirty, forty, years from now.

The students will discuss the things they have now that makes their lives better which they possibly would not have, had some older person not worked hard to make that possible.

The students will list the things they can do better than their grandparents and then list the things their grandparents can do better than they.

The students will compare a human life with that of a flower.

The students will invite a grandparent or an adopted grandparent to school to see "what's going on."

The students will gather information concerning the kinds of recreation available to people of all ages.

The students will take a field trip with their grandparents or adopted grandparents.

The students will visit an aging relative or home for the aged in order to dramatize a story, create a poem, sing songs, etc.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Audio-visual materials lend themselves to the development of empathy and insight concerning the natural function of aging.

Stringbean, a seventeen minute film, is about an old woman who supports herself by stitching evening purses. She plants a seed from a stringbean she is preparing for her supper. The plant soon grows too large for her tiny flat, and she plants it in the garden of the Tuilleries where she visits it each day. One day, gardeners discover this alien growth and tear it out, but the old woman notices it has produced fruit. Taking some beans with her, she once again plants seeds and waits for them to grow.

The film communicates a cherishing of life all the more impressive when manifested by an old woman near the end of her own. The struggle for sun and light by the plant becomes a metaphor for human life, as the film raises questions of meaning and motivation. (This film availab e through the Kent State University Audio Visual Services, BC2532.)

A discussion following the viewing of this film could include the following questions and/or activities.

Discussion questions:

1. How does the alternation between black and white and color photography comment on the action and reinforce ideas and emotions?

2. Was the old woman "beautiful?" What criterion can we use to answer? What is the TV commercial or advertising idea of beauty? What other kinds of beauty are there? Are only the young beautiful?

3. Was the old lady possessive of the stringbean plant? Was she growing it for herself or because she wanted it to have its own life. Allow time for each person in a small group to express an opinion.

4. Is there, or has there been, anything in your life comparable to the stringbean plant? Tell the others in your group about it.

Action Guide:

1. List these adjectives on the board: strong, weak, heroic, brave, senile, indomitable, pathetic, helpless, bored, optimistic, selfish, ornery. The group votes on each word as to whether it applies to the old lady in STRINGBEAN. Put a checkmark beside each word the majority of the group thinks applicable. Which group of words sounds more like the usual description of an old lady, the checked or the unchecked?

2. On a sheet of paper, write the adjectives from the board that you think apply to you. Add some others if you wish. Choose the three that most apply, and number them starting with the one that describes you most strongly of all.

3. The class breaks into groups of three for the remaining activities. In the small groups, each person reads his list of adjectives that describe him. (Any who wish may pass.) Others in the groups may ask a person to explain how a given adjective on his list applied to him. There should be no putdowns; members of each group should be accepting and draw each other out.

4. Rank these four ways of living after retirement age in the order of their appeal to you. Share your order with your group.

   - in a retirement home
   - alone and on a pension
   - alone and continuing to work for income
   - with your son and his wife and children

The Ending, a fifteen minute filmstrip, involves a young girl helping an old man home on a hot day and revealing the apprehensions and misunderstandings she had experienced with old people until this brief encounter. (This film available through the Kent State University Audio Visual Services).

Aging, a twenty-nine minute black and white film, discusses the stereotype that an old person is useless. It deals with the re-establishment of the natural roles of grandparents as important, useful family members. Benefits accrue to the child, parent, and the aging person. (This film available through the Kent State University Audio Visual Services).

Antonio, a twenty-eight minute film, is the story of an Italian immigrant and widower. He faces the problems of old age and loneliness with the most positive of resources; courage, faith, and a store of beloved memories. (This film available through the Kent State University Audio Visual Services, CC3169.)

Foxfire is about a journalism class who are assigned to interview the residents of their own community. They discover a folklore native to their appalachian home. Aided by the wisdom and knowledge of a previous generation, they succeed in fielding a successful magazine, Foxfire, which details a way of life. (This film available through the Kent State University Audio Visual Services, BC2948).

The first two audio visual sources are appropriate for elementary school children. The third film is suggested for teacher viewing while the last two are suggested for elementary school children.

More audio visual materials on aging are needed at the elementary school viewing level. We do find a slight, but increasing, trend toward an awareness of the aging process. At the present time it is occurring mainly within that segment of our population who are somewhere between sixty and ninety years of age. Our thesis contends that aging begins at birth and is a natural developmental principle. We want elementary school students to view this aspect of living as an integral part of every human being's growth process. We feel that aging has much to do with how we perceive each other as human beings. Depending upon how we perceive one another will be the manner in which we behave toward each other. Understanding and acceptance are basic concepts in any curriculum for aging.

Children's Literature offers an excellent means of awakening children to aging, death, and dying. The bibliography listed below gives a brief description of each book.

PRIMARY BOOKS:

Brown, Margaret W. The Dead Bird, illustrated by Remy Charlip. W.R. Scott, 1958.

The bird was dead when the children found it, so they dug a grave in the woods and buried it and sang a song to it.

Miles, Miska. Annie and the Old One, illustrated by Peter Parnall. Little, Brown, 1971.

Annie, a little Navajo Indian girl, becomes troubled when her aging grandmother makes the announcement that when Annie's mother completes the rug she is weaving, grandmother will return to Mother Earth. Annie tries several methods to halt the progress on the rug, but eventually learns that one cannot stop time.

Viorst, Judith. The Tenth Good Thing About Barney, illustrated by Erik Blegvad. Atheneum, 1971.

When his parents help him bury his dead cat, Barney, in the garden, the boy gives a eulogy about Barney's characteristics and then goes through a period of mourning for his pet. After his father plants seeds in the garden and explains how Barney's eventual decomposition will aid in helping things grow, the boy realizes that this is the tenth good thing about Barney.

Zolotow, Charlotte. My Grandson Lew, pictures by William Pene Dubois. Harper, 1974.

Six year old Lew is awakened one night by thoughts of and longing for his grandfather. In the middle of the night, Lew and his mother talk about Grandpa and Lew's memory of some of the experiences he and Grandpa shared when Lew was a toddler.

INTERMEDIATE BOOKS:

Armstrong, William. Sounder. Harper, 1969.

"An emotional account of how a young black boy's life is changed when his father is sentenced to a chain gang because he stole a ham to feed his family. The father is finally freed but dies soon afterward."[1]

Beatty, Patricia. Long Way to Whisky Creek. Morrow, 1971.

"A humorous and entertaining tale of the old west in which two boys who travel four hundred miles across Texas to pick up and take home the body of an older brother."[1]

Buck, Pearl. The Big Wave, illustrated with prints by Hiroshige and Hokasai. Day, 1948.

"To live in the presence of danger makes us brave and makes us know how good life is. This is the lesson which Kino and his playmate Jiya learned when a big tidal wave swept away the fishing village where Jiya lived." [2]

Cleaver, Vera and Bill. Grover, illustrated by Frederick Marvin. Lippincott, 1970.

"Ten year old Grover goes through an agonizing period of adjustment beginning with his mother's sudden departure to the hospital and ending with his eventual acceptance of her death. The strain is increased by adult attempts to 'protect' him from the truth during her illness and his father's withdrawal into grief after her suicide."[2]

Feagles, Anita. He Who Saw Everything: The Epic of Gilgamesh, illustrated by Xavier Bonzalex. Young Scott, 1966.

Gilgamesh, an ancient king of the Sumerian city of Uruk, was an all powerful being--half man-half god, who supposedly was in communication with the gods. His friendship with Enkidu and his sorrow after the latter's untimely death impelled Gilgamesh's odyssey in search of everlasting life.

Harnden, Ruth. The High Pasture, illustrated by Vee Guthrie. Houghton, 1964.

Twelve year old Tim is sent to spend the summer with his Aunt Kate in Colorado. He realizes that his mother is sick, but the gravity of her illness is kept from him. Her condition weighs on his mind, and he seems to sense his impending loss with feelings of guilt, anger and desertion.

Lee, Virginia. The Magic Moth, drawings by Richard Cuffari. Seabury, 1972.

Ten year old Maryanne Foss had been born with an incorrectible heart defect. After several operations, the doctor told the family that it was only a matter of time. The family cares for her, and when she dies, they are all with her at home. Sorrow at the loss of a loved one is brought out, but death is looked at as a natural event with the underlying theme that life never ends--it just changes.

Moore, Merill. "Fable" in Some Haystacks Don't Even Have Any Needles and Other Complete Modern Poems, Ed. Stephen Dunning. Scott Foresman, 1969. p. 138

This poem is a dialogue between two people, one asking whether there is anything he can take to avert death. The other answers there is nothing one can do to avoid death for everyone has to die.

Orgel, Doris. The Mulberry Music, Pictures by Dale Payson. Harper, 1966.

Libbey, an eleven year old sixth grader, is confronted with the illness and ultimate death of her beloved, vital grandma. Libby becomes frustrated with her parents when they attempt to conceal grandma's serious

condition from her, in addition to not allowing Libby to see grandma. Eventually, seeing her grandma at the point of death is a very traumatic experience for Libby--although she is given a voice in funeral preparations.

Smith, Doris. A Taste of Blackberries, illustrated by Charles Robinson, Crowel, 1973.

Told in the first person, this is a boy's account of the death of his close friend, Jamie. Vital, fun-loving Jamie was always horsing around. So when Jamie was stung by a bee, his symptoms were thought a joke by his friend, the narrator. After Jamie's death, his friend goes through stages of denial, anger, mourning, and questioning the possibility of an after life.

Wojiechowska, Maia. Shadow of a Bull, drawings by Alvin Smith. Atheneum, 1964.

"Manola was the son of the great bullfighter, Juan Olivar. Ever since his father's death the town of Arcangel (Spain) has waited for the time when Manolo would be twelve and face his first bull. From the time he was nine and felt in his heart that he was a coward Manolo worked and prayed that he might at least face this moment with honor, knowing it could well bring his death."[2] (Newberry Award, 1965)

Zim, Hert S. and Bleeker, Sonia. Life and Death, illustrated by Rene Martin. Morrow, 1970.

This is a very objective account of contrast between animate-inanimate things and their different chemical make-ups; life expectancy of animals and man; how death is determined in man; funeral and burial customs in the U.S. and other countries; and considerations of an after-life. It emphasizes the concept that although death cannot be avoided, people who lead full lives, via their love and usefulness, come to accept all of life, including its end.

YOUNG ADULT BOOKS:

Behn, Harry. Faraway Lurs. World, 1963.

"This is a story about two prehistoric tribes and a romance which develops between two young people despite growing conflict. A witch causes two greedy men to sink in quicksand and the young lover superstitiously gives up her life to restore a water supply which has dried up."[1]

Gryant, William C. "Thanatopsis" in American Poets, 1800-1900, Edmund H. Cady, etc. Scott Foresman, 1966.

This is Bryant's contemplation of death, where the narrator poses the question and nature answers.

Craven, Margaret. I Heard the Owl Call My Name, Dell, 1973.

Mark Brian, a young priest, comes to the Indian village of Kingcome to serve its people. Here he learns the meanings of the Indian myths, the significance of nature, the conflict of the elders in seeing the young of the tribe adopt the white man's ways. Through his respect for them and their way of life, Mark becomes an integral part of the Indian community. Unbeknown to him, Mark has only a few years to live. When his time comes, and he finally becomes aware of his impending death, he chooses to spend his last days with the Indians, his people.

Monahan, James. Before I Sleep. . . The Last Days of Dr. Tom Dooley. Farrar, 1961.

This biography traces Dooley's life from 1959 until his death in January, 1961. It begins with Dooley's participation in the CBS unrehearsed documentary (TV) "Biography of a Cancer," in which Dooley's operation is the focal point. The book traces reactions of people close to Dooley and their perceptions of his life during his 17 month ordeal.

Wersba, Barbara. Run Softly, Go Fast. Atheneum, 1970.

Davy, a nineteen year old Jewish youth, explores his own identity through his estranged relationship with his father. This is precipated by the father's death of cancer. The book contains many love-hate feelings the boy experiences toward his father, and how Davy perceives the change in his father from a human being to a Jew who adopted the Protestant ethic of diligent work and "getting ahead."

FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS:

[1]Carr, Robin. "Death as Presented in Children's Books," Elementary English, 50:701-5 (March, 1973)

[2]Children's Catalog. H.W. Wilson, 197p, twelfth edition.

Hair, Jeanne Marie. "What Shall We Teach about Death in Science Classes?", Elementary School Journal (May, 1965).

Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth. Death: the Final Stage of Growth. Prentice-Hall, 1975.

Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth. On Death and Dying. Macmillan, 1969.

Morris, Barbara. "Young Children and Books on Death," Elementary English, 51:395-8 (March, 1974).

Moss, Judith. "Death in Children's Literature," Elementary English, 49:530-2 (April, 1972).

Swenson, Evelyn J. "The Treatment of Death in Children's Literature," Elementary English, 49:401-404 (March, 1972).

Wolf, Anna W.M. Helping Your Child to Understand Death. Child Study Press, 1973.

A-V MATERIALS:

Edwards, Deanna. Peacebird, 33 1/3 rpm record of ten selections. Franciscan Communications Center, 1974.

IMPLEMENTATION

We present the following models on the teaching of aging as a reference point for discussion among teachers.

Model A - Teacher Education

Students will receive positive attitudes about aging as a result of teacher study. To gain knowledge about the aging process, teachers may engage in the following activities.

1. Listen to speakers from the field of geriatrics
2. Listen to retired persons speak
3. Listen to any older person speak about how he/she perceives aging.
4. Visit local homes for the aged
5. Visit extended care homes
6. Visit a retirement club
7. View and discuss audio-visual materials
8. Read articles from appropriate periodicals. Check the local library for sources.
9. Contact a nearby university for speakers or pertinent information.

Model B - Elementary School Children

Students will receive positive and wholesome attitudes towards death and dying.

1. To develop the concept that all living things are born, grown, and die, the students will study the life cycle of familiar plants and animals.
2. Reading and discussion of the book Charlotte's Web. The specific section pertaining to death is toward the end of the story. Charlotte dies leaving Wilbur very unhappy. Wilbur's sadness ends with the birth of Charlotte's children. (beginning of life cycle) Wilbur realizes then that Charlotte did not die in vain.

Model C-Elementary School Children

Children will be provided with an experience that will develop the concept of aging by discussing needs that are common to all ages. This is an independent activity that needs little teacher direction.

1. Use one piece of railroad board 22" x 24". Arrange several pictures of young and old on upper 13" of board. Fold bottom part up to make a pocket across the board. Use staples to divide the large pocket into three sections. (Or glue three pockets on.) Below pictures, above pockets, is printed the word, Things.

On pockets -	#1	I need and use
	#2	We need and use
	#3	I need and use

Also on each pocket is a picture -	#1	a young child
	#2	both
	#3	an old person

Make several small picture cards showing clothing, food, shelter, recreation, love, etc.

2. One child picks a card. He decides where he wants to put it, but he must give reasons for his choice. Others may question or challenge. Each takes a turn until cards are used up.

Model D - Elementary School Children

Children will be exposed to talented people who have continued to contribute to society after the age of retirement. This is also an activity that requires little teacher direction once the basic construction is completed.

1. Locate portraits of famous adults who have made contributions to society after the age of sixty.

2. Photostat the portraits. Drymount and laminate.

3. Write short biographical sketches about their accomplishments. Type on a 3" x 5" card and laminate.

4. Obtain a 24" x 36" tagboard. Drymount enlargements from "Faces and Feelings" project, on the tagboard.

5. Make cardboard pockets for clue cards, portraits and follow-up sheets.

6. Cover pockets with contact paper.

7. Label the pockets and decorate the tagboard.

8. Insert materials in proper pockets and hang on bulletinboard.

Model E - Elementary School Children

Children will be provided with the time and materials to write a letter to grandparents or other older people. This activity lends itself to the content areas.

1. Purchase a portfolio with 4 doubleback pockets.

2. Use an enlargement from "Faces and Feelings" project. Drymount and laminate.

3. Label portfolio pockets. Ideas, Stationery, Envelopes, Check-Sheet

4. Type samples for writing a letter and addressing an envelope. Drymount and laminate to pockets.

5. Make "Check-Sheet" with correct form for letter and envelope. Drymount and laminate.

6. Provide a list of ideas for letter message. Type, drymount and laminate.

Model F - Elementary School Children

Children will be able to detect the physical changes that occur during the aging process by arranging pictures in chronological order from youngest to oldest.

1. Select photographs of the individuals chosen for the project.

2. Purchase black/white print film and flashcubes for a Kodak instamatic camera.

3. Use the Ektagraphic Visualmaker, 3" x 3" frame and take shots of the selected photographs.

4. Develop film, print negatives and drymount prints.

5. Obtain a container for storage of finished photographs. Decorate the container.

6. Type directions, drymount, laminate and insert inside lid of container.

Model G - Elementary School Children

Children will conclude that emotional needs of older persons are much the same as those of any age group by studying facial expressions and body language of older people through photographs.

1. Select black and white portraits that express emotion. Use photography books.

2. Purchase 35 mm b/w print film.

3. Use adjustable copystand and take shots of the selected photographs. Develop film, print negatives, drymount and laminate prints.

4. Select a couple of the photographs and enlarge them: 7" x 9" or 6" x 8". Drymount and laminate.

5. Obtain a box for storage of finished photographs.

6. Take the lid of the box apart and drymount the enlargement to the outside top of the box.

7. Decorate the lid before reassembling.

8. Type directions, drymount, laminate and insert inside the lid of the box.

Model H-Junior High School Children

Children will view older adults as resource people by becoming involved in a one-to-one learning situation. A junior high school student will be matched with a resource person from the community.

1. Resource person will assist in the development of reading skills.
2. Student will know some one special person cares for him or her.
3. Resource person will encourage student to talk about interests.
4. Resource person and student may devise educational games for use by other students.

Education here should be informal and innovative - not full courses - and incorporated in the various subject matter units, especially health, physical education, science, reading, literature.

We must break away from the traditional negativism about aging and old age in our culture. Individuals all through life have been "graded" or "placed" according to "behavioral expectations" from childhood up through old age. Some devastating innuendoes towards the aged have been and still are "senile", "crack-pot", "old fogey", "weak-minded", "dirty old man", "fool", "silly old dame," "has-been," "obsolete creep" and so on. Youth in our society are associated with physical and mental vigor, speed, beauty; old age with decrease in physical and mental powers, unattractiveness, conservatism and inflexibility. There must be serious re-examination of the semantic problems involved in our studies if a more scientific frame of reference for the rising generation is to be achieved.

Death Rate Has Dipped

The death rate in the United States, which has wavered up and down over the last two decades, dipped in 1974 to 9.2 per 1,000 population, the same as for 1954.

Major contributors to the low level were declines in death rates from heart disease, the leading killer of Americans, stroke and accidents. The death rate from highway accidents dropped considerably, apparently because of a lower speed limit and less driving as a result of a fuel shortage.

Although the birth rate has been declining in recent years, it remains higher than the death rate. Therefore, the country's population continues to show a net gain each year. The death rates in 1954 and 1974 were lower than in any years since records first were kept, in 1900.

This research from the National Center for Health Statistics indicates that the percentage of our total population will be including more and more older persons. Clearly, the mandate for aging education is apparent.

Dr. Leland Jacobs of The Ohio State University tells us that education for aging in our elementary schools must be kept within a scientific framework to appeal effectively to today's children and youth. They are accustomed to "space age" imagery, scientific literature, test tube thinking and uncensored television close ups on social problems confronting society, including the continuing predicament of the aged.

Dr. K. Warner Schaie, Director, Gerontology Research Institute at the University of Southern California, relates the fact that each generation may show higher levels of intellectual ability. He found little intellectual decrement until the age of 65. After 65 there was little decrement until death. The aged are not intellectually deficient. Aging and intellect seem to be related only as a matter of individual differences. In attempting to

determine what causes "downhill intellectual functioning" as distinguished from "uphill intellectual functioning", Dr. Schaie concludes that this phenomenon is due to cumulative health data and life styles.

Age is a personalized response to how one perceives himself or herself in relation to it. It may well be that very young thinking minds become trapped in older physical frames. The body is not always the person.

Education for aging begins while the aging process is in its beginning stages. The child who enters the world today is all ready nine months old. The process of teaching its citizens about aging is the responsibility of the society in which we live. The school is one of many agencies that can assist in this basic process common to all of us.

FOOTNOTES

1. Elaine M. Brody, "Serving the Aged: Educational Needs as Viewed by Practice," Social Work, XV (October, 1970), p. 42.

2. Rose Kushner and Marion E. Bunch, ets., Graduate Education in Aging (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1967), p. 5.

3. Ibid

4. Ibid

5. Gladys Blue, "On Education for Aging," unpublished manuscript, The University of Akron, 1975.